

him to persevere in wrong doing? If, moreover, he becomes satisfied that his *interest* as well as his *duty* require a change of conduct, must he still adhere to his errors?

Can not a *nation* do wrong? do we not contend that Britain has often done so? and is it impossible that America should sometimes partake of human infirmities?

And if a nation does wrong, must its citizens defend even its errors? Must they spill their blood, and exhaust their treasure, and lose their liberties, rather than expose the *national faults*? But if the doctrine be true, that you cannot discuss such a question freely and shew the mistakes or the misconduct of your own country, the people will go on blindfolded, and will contend with honest, but mistaken zeal, for principles which if they had fully understood, they would have shuddered at supporting.

I have now given to my adversaries the most favourable side of the argument for them. But the question is not whether *our country* is in the wrong, but whether a few men in *power and place*, men whose power thrives by war, whose salaries are unaffected by it, cannot be in the wrong? The *country* is opposed to the war, for the question of impressment. The *country* knows that it is a question grossly exaggerated, not worthy of such sacrifices. The *country* does not wish to protect British seamen, nor to deprive Great-Britain of her natural defence.

But my last, and most complete justification is, that in my opinion, it would be against *our interest, as a nation*, and against the *interest of the seamen especially*, to gain the question in dispute. The moment our flag shall be a *complete asylum* to British seamen, under which they will be free from ALL search, 100,000 of them would find the way to our ports, reduce the wages of our native seamen, or send them about our streets to beg. It would be, in my opinion, the most destructive policy which could be adopted.

I will then ask, whether a man may not patriotically oppose a pretension of his own country, which he thinks will be essentially injurious to it?

I shall conclude, by quoting the words of an eminent politician, who wrote a century ago. "If therefore, said he, in future times, it shall be visible, that some men, to build up their own fortunes, are pushing at their country's ruin, good patriots must then exert all their virtue, they must reassume the *courage* of their *ancestors*; but chiefly they must sacrifice to the publick, all their *ancient animosities*; they must forgive one another; it must no more be remembered of *what party* any man was; it being sufficient to enquire whether he always acted honestly. At such a time, the *best men of both sides*, if the *name of party* still remains, must shake hands together, with a resolution to withstand the subtle and diligent enemies of the peace and prosperity of the country. In such a juncture, not only the best men of all parties must be taken in, but we must be angry with no sort of men, who will unite against the common enemies of our commerce and peace."